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E S S A Y

To prove the

Credibility of the Gospel,

FROM THE

DOCTRINE of the Efficacy of CHRIST's
Death for the Redemption of the
World.





ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the following Essay, presuming it might tend to elucidate an important Article of our Religion, was willing to take this Opportunity, by a Second Edition of Mr. TOMKINS's *Mediator*, to submit it to the Judgment of the Public. And, while he would acquaint the Public, that it is the Product of his *juvenile* Studies, he hopes his Youth and Inexperience will be accepted as a sufficient Plea for their Candour.

J. T.



AN
ESSAY

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TAKING it for granted, "That Repentance alone is not sufficient to procure for us an Indemnity, and to re-instate us in our original State of Purity and Felicity;" and "That, according to the plain and current Language of Scripture, our Redemption and Salvation are owing to the Death and Sufferings of Christ, as their real and meritorious Cause: Taking these Propositions for granted, I would attempt to prove that from this Doctrine we may draw some strong *presumptive* Arguments in Favour of Christianity; and that, on this Account, it is more worthy of Credit as a Divine Revelation. And this will appear (I think) from these Considerations. As,

1. If the Doctrine of Redemption through the Blood of Christ be true, then the *Means* made use

of well suit the *End*. The Scriptures represent Christ to be the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; as that divine Person, by whom the Father created all Things; as the first-born of every Creature; as the only begotten and best beloved of the Father: They assert that he was in the Beginning with God, and was a God; that he was before all Things, and that by him all Things subsist; as transcendently great and glorious, and as possessing peculiar Dignity and Honor with the Father, before the World was. Now if the only or principal End of the Incarnation, Humiliation, and Sufferings of this divine Person, was to instruct us in the Truth, to set us an Example of every divine Virtue, and at length to die for us as a Martyr, what Need was there for a Person of such distinguished Majesty, to bring about these Effects? Could not a Prophet, or an Apostle, or an Angel, have full as well answered these Purposes? Nay, may we not say that the Apostle *Paul*, as a Prophet and Instructor, and Preacher of Righteousness, did more by his Travels, Labors, and Ministrations, to reform the World, and spread the Knowledge of the Truth, than Jesus Christ, considered only as a Prophet and Instructor? And as to our Lord's Death, were not the same Ends promoted by the Deaths of the Confessors and Martyrs, from the Beginning of the World? What Proportion then is there betwixt the Dignity of Christ's Person, and the Efficacy of his Death and Sufferings, designed only as a Testimony to the Truth? But if by his Death he procured eternal Redemption for us, if by his Sufferings he wrought out the Salvation of an innumerable Multitude of intelligent and moral Agents, and restored them to a glorious Immortality,

talities, here is an Effect proportional to the Dignity and original Excellency of his Person ; then the Fruits of his Death are as great and as immense as his spotless Innocence, and his glorious resemblance of God, and Likeness to him in the Perfections of his Nature ; then the Expence of the Means does not exceed the End to be answered by them. And, on this Account, the Christian Plan of Redemption appears more wise, consistent, and uniform, than it does upon the other Scheme, and consequently the Death of Christ, considered as the Foundation of all the Advantages and Blessings we enjoy as Christians, must be, under the Gospel more worthy our esteem, and more worthy the Fountain of Wisdom ; and it's Characteristics as celestial and divine, more apparent than they would be, if the Death of our Lord is viewed only in the Light of that of an Exemplar and Martyr.

2. The Doctrine of Redemption, through the Blood of Christ, preserves the Analogy betwixt God's moral Government, as revealed in the Scriptures, and that Part of it we can trace without the Help of Revelation, in this present State and World. Observation and Experience teach us, that the Method of God's Government in this World is by the Mediation, and Agency and Interposition of the various Beings about us, and with whom we may be connected. It seems to be the Design of the divine Being to confer his Benefits and Blessings through the Hands of others ; so that universal Love, Benevolence, and Goodness may be promoted ; and we may be linked together in mutual Dependence. So one is under God the Means of Health, Peace, and Prosperity to another ; our Lives are preserved, our Ruin is prevented, and our Happiness brought about, by some kind Friend
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and Benefactor : We are indebted to others for almost every Satisfaction, Blessing, Instruction, and Improvement we enjoy : our Knowledge, our Virtue, our Liberty, and all our Enjoyments, in a lesser or greater Degree, flow to us by the Mediation of others : and our Felicity, in many Cases, depends entirely upon the Interposition of some benevolent Person. As far as we can discover, God's Government is by the Instrumentality and subordinate Agency of others ; and that God should thus govern the World in other Instances, of which we have not ocular Proof, seems (to say the least) very probable. And this Point the Christian Revelation seems to put out of Doubt ; here is the Discovery made of the Mediation of Jesus Christ and the invaluable and important Blessings flowing from his Interposition to save a lost and perishing World : And our Redemption through his Blood seems to be a noble, grand and considerable Part of the same Plan of the divine Government : and consequently that Revelation, that opens our Prospects and enlarges our Views with the farther and more illustrious Execution of the same Method of the divine Administrations, bids fair to come from Heaven ; and as what it reveals in this Respect is consonant to what Experience teaches us ; it bears striking Signatures of having God for it's Author ; and as this is more illustriously displayed in the Doctrine of the complete and entire Salvation of the penitent Sinner through the Blood of Christ : to *this* Doctrine the Gospel is beholden for an additional Evidence of it's celestial Origin and divine Authority : and on this account it is more credible than it would otherwise be.

3. The Doctrine of Redemption by the Blood of Christ accounts for the *frequent Mention* that is made of the Death of Christ in the New Testament,
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and for it's being *improved* as the Foundation of every Christian Grace and moral Virtue, and for it's being insisted upon as the most powerful Obligation to all Holiness and Goodness. No one who has perused the Writings of the New Testament can be a Stranger to the frequent Mention that is made of the Death of Christ as the most remarkable Instance of the Love of the Father, and the Grace of the Redeemer ; as that End for which Christ came into the World ; as what the Prophets had in a particular Manner foretold as the characteristic Mark of the Messiah ; and as a most cogent Reason for the Exercise of every moral and divine and social Virtue ; for Love to God, and Benevolence to Mankind, Humility, Patience, and universal Holiness. And according to the Account we have now given of the Design of the Death of Christ, as the Foundation of our Deliverance and Salvation from Sin and all it's penal Effects, we see the propriety of it's being thus insisted upon by the Sacred Writers ; for then the Doctrine of the Death of Christ is nearly of the same Importance and Influence in the Christian Revelation ; as the Belief of the Being and Perfections of God is in natural Religion ; and this renders the Gospel consistent, uniform and regular in it's several Parts : it preserves an Harmony and Agreement betwixt it's grand Doctrines and great Duties, and a Connexion betwixt the Principles and Practice of Religion : this accounts for the Manner of the Apostles writing and their Method of enforcing every Branch of Duty and every Obligation of Reason : Whereas from the Opinion that the Death of Christ was only an Example and as a Testimony to the Truth, it does not appear why the sacred Writers should insist more on the Death of our Lord, and urge that as a more powerful Obligation to Religion

ligion and Virtue than the Death of any other Prophet or Martyr. Consequently the former Scheme, as holding up to our view the Beauty, Order, Regularity and Harmony of the Gospel Revelation, must recommend it more to our Esteem, as more likely to come from the Author and Source of Perfection and Beauty, and from the God of Order : and because in a Divine Revelation a Distinction must be made betwixt Things of lesser and greater Importance, betwixt trivial Affairs and momentous Events, it would insist upon those Things chiefly, in which we are more nearly and intimately concerned, and which have the greatest Influence upon our Temper and Conduct.

4. The Death of Christ, as the Ground and Reason of our Pardon and eternal Life, affords a more glorious Display of the Divine Perfections ; and therefore this View of the Death of Christ represents the Gospel in a more valuable, important and excellent Light. Our Lord places Eternal Life in the Knowledge of God and of himself, and to form amiable and worthy Conceptions of the Deity is of the utmost Use in begetting a Love of him and proper Affections towards him ; and the more consistent and amiable a view any Revelation gives us of God, it's Worth, and genuine Goodness, and true Usefulness are enhanced thereby. And does not the *Wisdom* of God shine forth with peculiar Advantage in the Scheme of Redemption, in bringing so much Good out of, and in causing such an immense Bliss to flow from such an Evil as the Death of his own Son ? How evidently does Christ appear to be the *Wisdom* of God and the *Power* of God in the happy Benefits, the transcendently glorious and blessed Consequences of his Obedience to the Death of the Cross ? And then as to the *Goodness, Mercy,*
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and *Compassion* of God herein expressed, it passes the Power of Imagination to conceive, or the Force of Language to describe. Whereas if Christ by his Death only set us a Pattern of all Piety, Meekness, Submission and Goodness, or testified the Truth of his Mission, our Ideas of the divine *Wisdom* are not so grand and noble ; nor can our Sense of the *Love* of God be so striking, lively and affecting ; because the Manifestations of it are not so signal and remarkable. Who therefore would not think the Gospel more worthy of his Esteem upon the former than the latter Notion ? Does the Evidence of the Truth of the Gospel, from it's internal Characters, increase in Proportion, as it's Discoveries of the Perfections of God are more consistent, worthy, and just ? Must not the Gospel (upon the Supposition that the Doctrine of our Redemption through the Blood of Christ is a distinguishing Doctrine of it) appear to be more worthy of God, as displaying all his Attributes in the fairest Point of View and reflecting them in the most amiable Light in the Face of Jesus Christ, and in his Undertaking for our everlasting Happiness ? Shall we not have Reason to glory in a *crucified* Saviour, as in him are manifested the infinite Wisdom, boundless Goodness, and exceeding Benignity of the Divine Being ? Should not these Discoveries of the Perfections of God in the Death of Christ, and the consequent Fruits of it be studied and improved by us, as a blessed Guard against Infidelity, for surely that Religion bids fairest to come from Heaven, which contains the brightest Transcript of the Perfections of him, whose Throne is in the Heavens ?

5. And Lastly, This Doctrine of the Redemption of Sinners through the Blood of Christ, best tends to promote the grand and ultimate Design of every

Revelation from God, and must therefore give a proportional Authority to the Christian. To renew us again in Righteousness and true Holiness must be the Design of every Discovery of the divine Mind and Will to sinful and depraved Creatures; and to inforce and strengthen our moral Obligations and so to impress our Souls with the Excellency, Importance, and Necessity of Holiness, out of Love and Gratitude, and Interest, as to excite us to the immediate, constant, and unwearied Practice of it, must be its genuine and natural Tendency. And the more any Revelation appears suited to beget in us a Love of Goodness and sincere Piety, so much stronger must be the Presumption in its Favor. How much higher then rises this Evidence of the Truth of Christianity, upon the Supposition of the Truth of the Doctrine of our Salvation through the Sufferings of the Redeemer, than upon the Belief that his Sufferings were to no higher End than those of a Martyr. They then, besides enforcing Integrity and Honesty, Love and Piety, by our Lord's Example, shew us in a striking Manner the evil Nature of Sin, as the wise Governor of the World did not think fit to remit it without the Intervention of Christ's Death: They point out to View the Value and Importance of Holiness in the Sight of God, as it was exhibited in the Death of Christ, the Means of procuring such glorious and immense Blessings for the human Race. They afford us the most powerful and encouraging Motives to Repentance, from the Love of God and the Grace of the Redeemer, and shew us the Necessity of Holiness, as it will secure to us (through the Mediation of Christ, and what he has done for us) true Greatness, Honor, and Felicity, for the Attainment of which we should reckon

reckon Nothing too dear, not even Life itself; and they urge us more powerfully than any other abstract Reasoning, to love God and the Saviour, to devote all to the Honour of the Father and the Service of the Son; and, above all Things, to be ambitious, diligent, and zealous, in practising the Instructions and following the Example of our generous Friend, who shed his Blood to do us the greatest Service, and to raise us to the greatest Dignity, Honor, and Bliss. And, in Consequence, how greatly does a Scheme so well calculated to save at once from the Power and the penal Effects of Sin; a Method of Salvation, by which our Sanctification is strongly urged and recommended, tend to confirm our Faith in the Gospel; to promote our Adherence to it, and to render our Belief of it steady, rational, and effectual, and to produce the Fruits of Righteousness in our Lives and Conversations! How much better is the Gospel upon this Notion adapted to bring about the great Design of every Revelation; and therefore how much more worthy of our Regard and Esteem!

F I N I S.



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